

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this patent application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments, and the following remarks. Claims 15-16 and 18-25 are in the application. Claim 25 has been amended. No new matter has been added.

The Examiner objected to claim 25. Applicants have amended claim 25 in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions. Applicants submit that claims 15-25 are now in compliance with 35 U.S.C. §112.

The Examiner rejected claims 15-25 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 8-90481 in view of GB 2 118 524 and further in view of EP 0 352 576 A2. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Applicants have amended claim 25 to incorporate the elements of claim 17, now canceled. Claim 25 now claims that the coupling means is insulated relative to the housing.

The present application describes a switch-off box for a

robot system, which is different from the switch-off boxes according to the state of the art.

JP 8-90481 A shows a welding torch including a switch-off box mounted on a robot system, without coupling means allowing transmission of electric energy and without channels for transferring supplied media from one side of the coupling means to another. Only a hole for the welding wire is arranged in the middle of the switch-off box according to JP 8-90481.

Further, GB 2 118 524 shows a switch-off box being connected with a welding torch, where the power cable is connected to the welding torch by external cables. Such an external cable adversely affects the switch-off behavior of the switch-off device.

Finally, EP 0 352 576 A2 shows a switch-off box for a welding torch which is arranged in front of a motor for moving the welding wire, when seen in the direction of the movement of the welding wire. The switch-off behavior of such a construction is adversely affected by a lot of components, which must be moved together with the welding torch. The coupling means according to

EP 0 352 576 A2 does not show a switch-off box having channels as described in the present patent application. EP 0 352 576 A2 describes a connection of a welding torch with the hose pack wire as standardized connector (34) being fixed by means of a screw (32). When the connector (31) according to the EP 352 576 A2 is made of electrically conductive material, the isolation of the housing is more complex due to the screw (32). Furthermore, if the welding torch (10) is moved, the connector (31) together with the cables (27) must also be moved until the micro-switch (15) recognizes a movement of switching element (14). Therefore, it is necessary to move a lot of parts before activating the micro-switch (15). The switching behavior of such a switch-off box is not as good as in the embodiment of the present invention.

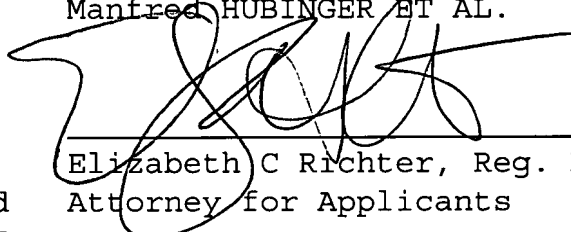
The switch-off box according to claim 25 of the present application is characterized by a coupling means being capable of transferring electrical energy, especially the welding current. Therefore, the coupling means is insulated relative to the housing. Additionally, channels are arranged within the coupling means whereby the supplied media such as for instance cooling liquid, protective gas etc., may be transferred from one side of the coupling means to its other side, thus safeguarding the

function of the welling torch.

These features are not taught or described by any of the cited references, so that combining the three references would still not lead to the claimed invention.

Accordingly, Applicants submits that claim 25 as amended, is patentable over the cited references, taken either singly or in combination. Claims 15-16 and 18-24 depend from claim 25 are therefore believed to be patentable as well. Early allowance of the amended claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
Manfred HUBINGER ET AL.

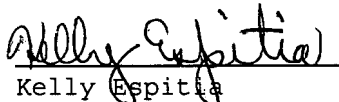


COLLARD & ROE, P.C.
1077 Northern Boulevard
Roslyn, New York 11576
(516) 365-9802

Elizabeth C Richter, Reg. No. 35,103
Attorney for Applicants

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Kelly Espitia